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Schaeffler Helps OEMs by Building Better Bearings

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and building the bearings needed to make the transmission work. That process takes between six months and a year, Modi said.

Schaeffler was able to do what it did for Chrysler by designing smaller parts using new materials. This enabled the company to make stronger, lighter and smaller bearings.

And the number of different bearings that go into a transmission are considerable, Modi said, noting that there are ball bearings, thrust bearings, planetary bearings, and they all had to be redesigned to fit Chrysler's nine-speed transmission specs. He said that Schaeffler is also working with Ford and GM to develop bearings for those companies' high-speed transmission designs.

Modi credited Schaeffler's proprietary "BearinX" system for making the design of new bearings possible, adding that this system helps analyze parts as they are designed and lets engineers know if the bearings work within the totality of the transmission system.

By having a system in place that helps with design process, Schaeffler is able to help OEMs get ever closer to the federally-mandated 54.5 mpg fleet average. Modi said that Schaeffler has already built the bearings for Chrysler's nine-speed transmission that goes with the Cherokee.

Luncheon Offers Investment Tips

The next event in the MotorCities.org Lunch & Learn series will be held Wednesday, July 10, from noon to 2:30 p.m. at The Henry Ford – Benson Ford Research Center in Dearborn.

The series is called, "Investing Strategically in Today's Market: Basic tips for examining your non-profit financial management and investment portfolio in this ever-changing fiscal climate."

The July 10 luncheon meeting features MotorCities' executive accountant, Nancy Darga, who will share best practices based on her experiences as an accountant and an auditor in the profit and not-for-profit sectors, such as the basic building blocks of organizational management, case statements and strategic planning.

Lunch will be served promptly at noon. Those planning to attend should register in advance at www.motorcities.org.

The Henry Ford – Benson Ford Research Center is at 20900 Oakwood Blvd.

Got News?

If you have solid business news for this paper, please contact us at News@DetroitAutoScene.com.

Quality Victory in Hand, GM Executives Praise Employees

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tion to become an annual event at GM.

David Sargent, vice president, Global Automotive at J.D. Power, said he's not surprised by the survey results.

"It's important to remember that this quality just didn't happen last Tuesday," Sargent said. "In 2010, I spent a lot of time talking to the media, answering the question why the government should let GM and Chrysler survive when their vehicle quality was so poor. I said that's a perception that isn't accurate. I want to say thanks for making me right."

Sargent said that in the last couple of weeks he's been getting a similar question. When did GM get so good?

"I told those same reporters, 'Don't you remember our conver-

sations from a couple of years ago?'" Sargent said. "This kind of quality just doesn't happen one Tuesday. This is the result of years of hard work by a lot of people. The survey results are no surprise to those of us who have been following what GM's been doing."

And, he said, J.D. Power surveyed drivers and they were the ones who liked what GM did. The products, said Sargent, were actually built for people and not for engineers.

But achieving quality is only half the battle, he said – changing people's perception is also very important. He said if someone were to ask 100 "civilians" away from Detroit who had better quality cars, GM or Toyota, 90 people out of 100 would probably say Toyota.

And repeating next year will be difficult, Sargent said. GM will

have a number of launches in the next few months. Many of the GM vehicles that placed high in the survey results were at the end of their life cycles, he pointed out, adding that Ford's survey results show that launching a new product has its own difficulties. He said he fully expects Ford to be strong next year.

And Toyota is working hard to get back on top, Sargent said, adding that he was amazed at how quickly it turned itself around after its recent accelerator problems. But, he said, that's because Toyota has a lot of brand equity and they built on that. But GM is doing the right things and he said he expects they will continue to stay on course.

Akerson said he was glad the press was at the celebration.

"Sometimes it's nice to report good news for a change," he said.

GM Appoints Boler-Davis Senior VP, Global Quality

GM CEO Dan Akerson took the time to announce at a special celebration the appointment of Alicia Boler-Davis to senior vice president, Global Quality and Global Customer Experience.

The announcement was made during an employee gathering at the Tech Center in Warren June 26 to mark the high grades given to GM quality by a J.D. Power owner survey.

The new post extends Boler-Davis's customer experience role from a U.S. position to oversee the rest of the world where GM does business.

The expansion of her responsibilities to include the global customer experience, said Akerson, continues GM's efforts to transform itself into a customer-centric organization committed to providing the best overall customer experience in the automotive industry.

In her new role, effective July 1, Boler-Davis reports to Akerson. She will also be a member of GM's Executive Operations Committee.

"Alicia Boler-Davis is a proven leader whose diverse experiences in manufacturing, product development and customer experience give her a unique insight into customer expectations," said Akerson. "She will lead a companywide, global approach to infusing the voice of the customer into everything we do."

GM has several initiatives under way to improve the overall customer experience, said Akerson:

- Most substantial dealer renovation in GM's history;
- GM call centers transformed into Customer Engagement Centers, staffed with expert advisors who are proactive and empowered to resolve most issues on the spot;
- Connected Customer Specialists located across the country to interact with dealers and customers on their needs and terms – Cadillac CUE, Chevy MyLink and Buick and GMC IntelliLink.

Before being named vice president, Global Quality and U.S. Customer



Alicia Boler-Davis

Experience, Boler-Davis was plant manager of the Orion Assembly and Pontiac Stamping plants in Michigan.

She joined GM in 1994 and has served in various engineering and manufacturing leadership positions, including vehicle line director/vehicle chief engineer, small car; plant manager for Lansing's Consolidated Operations and Arlington Assembly.

She earned a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from Northwestern University and a master's degree in engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Faurecia's Sales Ranking Surges from 8th to 5th in One Year

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new, expanded North American headquarters facility (also in Auburn Hills) to be completed sometime in 2014.

In the North American market, 32 percent of Faurecia's sales are generated by emissions control; 31 percent by interior systems; 34 percent by automotive seating and 3 percent by automotive exteriors.

The company's acquisition in June 2012 of the Automotive Components Holdings (ACH) interior systems business at the Saline, Mich., plant helped lift Faurecia to the number one position among interiors suppliers last year, while contributing significantly to its rise in the rankings overall among North American suppliers.

The former Saline ACH interiors business represents nearly \$368 million of Faurecia's sales.

"Faurecia's acquisition of the Saline business reinforced our leadership position in interior systems and our global partnership with Ford Motor Company," said Heneka.

"It strategically fits with Faurecia's key priorities, directly tying to our core focus, continuous improvement in operating performance, global customer expansion, technology leadership and strategic growth plans.

"We see tremendous opportunities ahead for Faurecia, employees, local communities and other key stakeholders."

In 2012, while light vehicle pro-

duction was growing at a fast rate in North America, Faurecia sales outpaced that rate, growing by 41.3 percent in 2012 alone.

The new headquarters facility soon to be under construction – at 2800 High Meadow Circle in Oakland Technology Park near I-75 and University Drive – positions Faurecia North America in a more highly visible, easily accessible, more spacious location that is tailored to its needs.

Upon the building's completion in the spring of 2014, up to 700 employees will be transferred to the building from three smaller Michigan facilities: the

current Faurecia Automotive Seating Technical Center on Meijer Drive in Troy; Faurecia's Oakland Shared Services Center on Squirrel Road in Auburn Hills; and its Oakland Technical Center for Automotive Exteriors on W. Entrance Drive in Auburn Hills.

Faurecia North America currently accounts for nearly 30 percent of the Nanterre, France-based supplier's global sales, and is one of the regions growing most rapidly for Faurecia sales. Ford, GM, Chrysler, Fiat, Volkswagen, BMW and other automotive OEMs are Faurecia customers.

'Coolest Under \$18K' List Names 3 Detroit OEMs' Cars

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Cooler Cars runner-up."

KBB said consumers would like the car because it delivers "an outstanding mix of style and substance" and that the 2013 Ford Focus enriches its fundamentally solid and efficient basic package with the availability of class-leading technologies, including My Ford Touch, active park assist and a PowerShift dual-clutch 6-speed automatic transmission, as well as offering a pure electric alternative.

The Dart also rated high in the eyes of KBB's reviewers.

They stated that while the Dart is an American car with Italian roots, it is the product of both the Chrysler Group and Fiat.

Reviewers wrote, "The multi-

national compact sedan offers its own unique combination of personalization and performance, including all the tech you need."

KBB also said of the Dart that it was Dodge's first compact model since the Neon, and that the 2013 Dart "is an impressive exercise that's stylish, roomy, well-finished and offers loads of powertrain and personalization possibilities.

"With a host of new techno touches, innovative user-friendly features and multiple trim grades – including a late-arriving, performance-oriented R/T variant – this engaging front-drive sedan can be tailored to meet almost any set of buyer preferences.

"Given its equally aggressive pricing, the 2013 Dodge Dart is poised to be a major player in a

"More than anything else, I'm glad to have this chance to speak directly to all of you about quality. Whether you work in design, product development or on the factory floor, it's the decisions you make every day that either satisfy customers or convince them to shop somewhere else. It's that simple.

"And by working together, you have achieved something that's never been done by GM in the 27-year history of the J.D. Power Initial Quality Study. Congratulations."

He said that what has happened during the last four tumultuous years make what has been done that much more impressive.

Small, Mid-size Segments Spur Ford's Growth

Ford's market share is growing at a faster rate than its competitors in the United States, gaining nearly a full percentage point through May, largely in the hotly contested small utility vehicle and midsize sedan segments – and on the coasts, said Joe Hinrichs, Ford president of The Americas.

"Our gains for the Ford brand in the U.S. are driven by our new products," Hinrichs said. "We are absolutely committed to continuing the aggressive introduction of new products throughout our showroom."

Since the introduction of the new Fiesta three years ago, the Ford brand has achieved the fastest retail share growth of any automotive brand on the west and east coasts combined – up almost 2.5 percentage points compared with 2008 – based on Polk retail registration data. This year, the growth is largely based on share gains for the Ford Escape small utility vehicle and Ford Fusion midsize sedan, Hinrichs said.

The share gains demonstrate the success of Ford's push to win over customers by investing more in small cars, midsize sedans and small utilities – in what Ford has dubbed the super segment, he said, adding that, particularly on the west coast, Ford vehicles' standout design and leading fuel efficiency in this segment are helping the company to close the market share gap with Japanese rivals.

Based on Ford analysis of Polk retail registration data, Ford's east and west coast retail market share is 1 percentage point away from Honda.

"What's so encouraging is the quality of our share gains," said Jim Farley, executive vice president, Global Marketing, Sales and Service and Lincoln. "Customers are increasingly choosing highly equipped vehicles such as our Titanium models."

super-competitive market segment that includes established heavyweights like the Chevrolet Cruze, Ford Focus, Honda Civic and Mazda Mazda3."

KBB said of the Spark, "The only all-new nameplate on this year's list is also the first car in the world to integrate with Apple's Siri assistant via 'Eyes Free' mode. Press a button on the steering wheel and ask Siri to read you text messages or sports scores, or compose your own message via voice. Connectivity is cool."

KBB elaborated further by saying in its review of the Spark, "America's rising gas prices have made this model more relevant. That being said, the Spark's miniscule size, edgy styling and smart packaging are what really make it stand out."